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News Release

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Freeman Changing Visitor Guidelines

Health System Working to Curb COVID-19 Risk to Patients & Staff

Joplin, MO – Freeman Health System is announcing a change in its visitor policy that will begin at 7:00 am Thursday, November 12. Patients will be allowed one visitor per day in most cases.

“We are doing this for the protection of our patients, visitors and caretakers at our hospitals,” says Paula F. Baker, Freeman President and Chief Executive Officer. “As many people know, the number of cases of COVID-19 are up in the community, and this is a measure we can take to help flatten the curve.”

Access to the emergency room will be restricted to the hospital front entrance from 7:00 am – 7:00 pm. After 7:00 pm, the emergency room can be accessed through the emergency department (ED) entrance across from the ED parking lot.

General access to the hospital will be restricted to the main entrance, where visitors and incoming patients will go through a screening that includes the following questions:

1. Have you, in the last 7 days, exhibited any of the following symptoms:
 - Fever (100.04 or above) or chills
 - Cough that is new cough and could be related to the other symptoms (not just normal cough, allergies, etc.)
 - Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
 - Fatigue
 - Headache
 - New loss of taste or smell
 - Sore throat
 - Congestion or runny nose

- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

2. In the last 14 days, have you had direct contact with anyone that is suspected of or been confirmed to have COVID-19?

If you answer yes to any three of the symptoms listed above, including question #2, or you have an actual temperature of 100.4°F or greater, you will not be allowed to enter the facility other than to receive treatment.

There are a few exceptions to the visitor policy, including maternity, pediatrics, NICU, end of life cases and the emergency department. Masking is still required for all.

At Freeman physicians' offices, one visitor is allowed to accompany a patient if needed for support or to offer transportation. Masking is also required in these facilities.

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About Freeman Health System

Locally owned, not-for-profit and nationally recognized, Freeman Health System includes Freeman Hospital West, Freeman Hospital East, Freeman Neosho Hospital and Ozark Center – the area's largest provider of behavioral health services – as well as two urgent care clinics, dozens of physician clinics and a variety of specialty services. In 2019, Freeman earned dozens of individual awards for medical excellence and patient safety from CareChex®, a quality rating system that helps consumers evaluate healthcare providers. *U.S. News & World Report* named Freeman Health System the Best Hospital in Southwest Missouri for 2019. With more than 300 physicians on staff representing more than 70 specialties, Freeman provides cancer care, heart care, neurology and neurosurgery, orthopaedics, children's services and women's services. Additionally, Freeman is the only Children's Miracle Network Hospital in a 70-mile radius. For more information, visit freemanhealth.com.